



COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY

This policy and procedure underline the process by which AIO Training (AIO) will manage and respond to complaints and appeals received by students with regard to their dealings with AIO, its trainers/assessors, other staff, its agents or another learner. It provides opportunity for students to formally present their case at minimal or no cost. AIO will take all complaints and appeals seriously and will ensure that the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness are adopted at every stage of the complaint and appeal process.

Information about the complaints and appeals process

AIO provides a publicly accessible system for the receiving and management of complaints or appeals. These are comprehensible and embraces the principles of fairness and transparency throughout all stages of the process.

All students or intending students are provided with information about the complaints and appeals process through the Student Handbook, and AIO's website. Students are also provided with information about the complaints and appeals process during orientation. The CEO is responsible for ensuring that all staff at AIO are made aware of the policies and procedures relating to complaints and appeals. This information is disseminated through the staff handbook and during the induction process.

Definitions

Complainant - The person raising the complaint.

Appellant - The person appealing a decision

Appeal - request by a student to reconsider a result or decision.

Complaint - Dissatisfaction expressed by a Complainant about a product or service provided requiring resolution.

What can a complaint be about?

A complaint may include but not limited to:

- the service provided, or not provided by AIO
- aspect of training and assessment
- conduct or decisions made by staff
- conduct or decisions made by Trainers/Assessors
- services provided by a third party (agent)
- conduct of other students in the College

What can an appeal be about?

An appeal can be about any decision made by AIO which has an impact on a student. These may include:



- assessment decisions/outcomes

Grounds for an appeal against an assessment decision (where the student feels the assessment decision is incorrect) may include the following;

- The judgement as to whether competency has been achieved and demonstrated was made incorrectly;
 - The judgement was not made in accordance with the marking criteria;
 - Alleged incorrect information from the assessor regarding the assessment process;
 - Alleged inappropriate assessment process for the particular competency;
 - Faulty or inappropriate equipment; and/or inappropriate conditions.
- course admissions
 - response to a complaint
 - other general decisions made by AIO (suspending or cancelling enrolment)
 - services provided by a third party (agent)

Procedure

AIO encourages that in the first instance, the complainant/appellant, discuss with the person(s) concerned as a means of resolving the issue before escalating the matter to a formal complaint or appeal.

Students have access and opportunity to discuss the matter with their Trainer, RTO Manager or the CEO.

Where resolution cannot be achieved, the complainant has access to the formal complaints and appeals process. At any time through the complaints and appeals process, where AIO considers more than 60 calendar days are required to process and finalise the complaint or appeal, the complainant/appellant will be advised in writing with the provision of reason and be provided with regular updates on the progress of the matter. AIO will respond to any complaint or appeal the student makes regarding his or her dealings with AIO, it's staff, another student at AIO, or it's education agents.

AIO will maintain the enrolment of the student during the complaints and appeals process, unless there are extenuating circumstances relating to the student's welfare;

Extenuating circumstances relating to the welfare of the student may include, but are not limited to;

The student;

- has medical concerns, severe depression or psychological issues which lead AIO to fear for the student's wellbeing
- has engaged, or threatens to engage in behaviour that is reasonably believed to endanger the student, other students or staff
- any other reason deemed necessary by CEO to ensure the wellbeing of its staff and student

Formal Review (internal)

1. In order to commence the formal review, a complaint must be received using AIO's complaint or appeal form, available from AIO website, reception desk or from the Administration Officer. Students can submit the completed form formally presenting

- their case, accompanied by any supporting documentation in person or via email to info@aiotraining.vic.edu.au.
2. AIO staff will refer all complaints and appeals to the RTO Manager who will, upon receipt of the complaint/appeal, provide written acknowledgement to the complainant/appellant within 5 working days. This may include the request for further information.
 3. The RTO Manager will commence assessing the complaint or appeal within 10 working days of it being made (receipt) in a professional, fair and transparent manner in line with this policy and finalise the outcome as soon as practicable
 4. During the review, the complainant will be contacted and a meeting arranged to discuss the matter. The complainant/appellant may be accompanied and assisted by a support person. A record of the meeting discussions will be maintained, including considerations to resolve the complaint/appeal
 5. The RTO Manager will determine the outcome and advise the complainant in writing of their decision within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint, including reasons of the outcome.
 6. If the outcome of the process is favourable to the complainant, AIO will provide the student with a written statement of the outcome, including detailed reasons for the outcome and implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required.
 7. Where the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they will be advised of their right to an internal appeal at no cost.
 8. Where an appeal has been made in relation to assessment decisions/outcomes, an investigation into an assessment appeal may result in one of the following outcomes:
 - a) The Appeal being upheld; in this event the following options will be available:
 - i. The original assessment will be re-assessed, potentially by another assessor.
 - ii. A new assessment shall be conducted or arranged.
 - b) The Appeal being rejected, or not upheld in accordance with AIO's Training and Assessment Policy in which case, the student will be required to:
 - i. Undertake further training or experience prior to further assessment; or
 - ii. Re-submit further evidence; or
 - iii. Submit or undertake a new assessment.

Internal Appeals

1. If the complainant/appellant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they may lodge an appeal in writing by completing and submitting the Appeal Form.
2. An internal appeal must be made in writing addressed to AIO's CEO. Where this occurs, the CEO will contact the complainant/appellant to arrange a meeting for further discussion. The complainant/appellant may be accompanied and assisted by a support person
3. The CEO will take into consideration matters arising from the complaint/appeal, including all discussions held and determine the outcome of the appeal. The appellant will be advised in a written statement of the outcome within 20 working days of receipt of the Internal Appeal, including detailed reasons for the outcome.
4. If the outcome of the process is favourable to the appellant, AIO will implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required
5. If the student is not successful in AIO's internal complaints handling and appeals process, AIO will advise the student within 10 working days of concluding the internal review of the student's right to access an external complaint handling and appeals



process at minimal or no cost. AIO will provide the student with the contact details of the appropriate complaints handling and external appeals body.

External Appeals

If the appellant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Internal Appeals Process, they have the right to access an external appeal. Once a student has applied all steps of AIO Complaints and Appeals process and they are still dissatisfied about a decision made or action taken.

Complaints can be made externally through the following avenues:

- National Training Complaints Hotline:
- The National Training Complaints Hotline is a national service for consumers to register complaints concerning vocational education and training. The service refers consumers to the appropriate agency/authority/jurisdiction to assist with their complaint.
- Consumers can register a complaint with the National Training Complaints Hotline by:
Phone: 13 38 73, Monday - Friday, 8am to 6pm nationally.
For more information about the National Training Complaints Hotline, refer to the following webpage: www.dewr.gov.au/national-training-complaints-hotline

- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA):

Complainants may also complain to RTO'S registering body: Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). However, ASQA will only use the information you provide to inform its regulatory approach. ASQA is not a consumer protection agency and cannot act as an advocate for individual students.

For more information, refer to the following webpage:

<https://www.asqa.gov.au/about/complaints/complaints-about-training-providers>

Record Keeping and Continuous Improvement

AIO will securely maintain records of all complaints and appeals and their outcomes. If the internal or external complaints handling or appeal process results in a decision or recommendation in favour of the student, AIO will immediately implement the decision or recommendation, and/or take the preventive or corrective action required by the decision, and advise the student of that action. AIO will also identify potential causes of complaints and appeals and takes appropriate corrective action to eliminate or mitigate the likelihood of reoccurrence. These will be added to the continuous improvement register.